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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#). UNSC Vote on Syria

[2](#). Iran

[3](#). Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Almost all media led with PM Sharon's political situation in the Knesset. The media reported that Sharon decided on Monday to postpone a fateful Knesset vote on the appointments of Likud ministers by a week, avoiding a defeat that could have led to early elections and a split in his party. Banners in both Yediot and Maariv talk of a "cease-fire" within the Likud. Ha'aretz cites a legal opinion prepared by A-G Menachem Mazuz. The opinion reportedly states that, if the Knesset does not approve Vice PM Ehud Olmert's permanent appointment as finance minister by November 9, when his three-month appointment as acting finance minister expires, the political and administrative consequences are liable to be so severe that they could force early elections. The media quoted Sharon as saying in his address at the opening of the Knesset winter session that Israel will press ahead with intensive construction of the separation fence, that "the Palestinians must understand that only a determined fight against terrorism, including dismantling its organizations, will ensure the quiet we all yearn for," and that "the government's policy is to work toward implementing the Roadmap with the 14 Israeli qualifications." The media said that Sharon's comments contained no surprises.

Major media reported that Sharon will convene the diplomatic-security cabinet today to approve an agreement on the Rafah border crossing that will include the stationing of third-party monitors, most likely from the EU. The media reported that under the agreement, Palestinians would be able to cross from Gaza to Egypt and vice versa, through the Rafah crossing, which would be manned by Palestinian, Egyptian, and EU officials. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met Sunday night with representatives of Quartet disengagement envoy James Wolfensohn, who has been facilitating negotiations over this matter for months. Israel Radio reported that further contacts on the issue will include PA ministers. The Jerusalem Post reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, who Ha'aretz says engineered the agreement with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and intelligence chief Omar Suleiman in Cairo last week, is slated to leave for Washington tonight and that he is believed to be keen to enter meetings with Bush administration officials, who have been long eager to see an agreement reached, with one in hand to present to them.

All media cited the UN Security Council's unanimous vote for a resolution demanding that Syria cooperate fully with a UN probe into the death of former Lebanese

PM Rafiq Hariri or face possible "further action." The media note that the UNSC did not mention the possibility of imposing sanctions if Damascus does not comply. Ha'aretz reported that on Monday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice threatened Syria with "serious consequences." Ha'aretz reported that Israel welcomed the resolution but that it urged the international community to keep up the pressure on Damascus until it halts its support for terrorism. The newspaper quoted a GOI source in Jerusalem as saying, "This was a positive resolution. The fact that the international community is no longer acting forgivingly toward Syria constitutes extremely significant progress in comparison with the past."

Ha'aretz's web site and other media cited U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley as saying on Monday that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas must crack down on Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the wake of last week's suicide bombing in the coastal city of Hadera. The remarks, which were reportedly prepared for AIPAC's National Summit 2005 in Los Angeles, were released by the White House. Leading media reported that Monday and last night, the IDF continued its arrest operation in the West Bank, and that Qassam rocket fire from Gaza persisted. Several media reported that the IDF fired rockets and shells into Gaza Strip areas where Palestinian fire originated. Yediot reported that members of an organization calling itself "Al-Qaida's Jihad in Palestine" are active in the Gaza Strip, in the mosques of which they have distributed a brochure including a greeting: "Al-Qaida's Jihad in Palestine greets the Islamic nation upon the month of Ramadan." The newspaper reported that the IDF's Intelligence Branch told the cabinet on Sunday that the Iranian government funds the group. Yediot cited the concern of the defense establishment that the Strip would become a base for world terror.

The Jerusalem Post reported that PA Interior Minister Nasser Yousef was a surprise guest at the fourth annual Iftar dinner for Arab dignitaries hosted by President Moshe Katsav on Sunday.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the PA has decided to turn the former Gaza Strip settlement of Neve Dekalim into a university campus.

Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons web site's entry for the convicted spy Jonathan Pollard shows that he is expected to be released from prison in 2015. Ha'aretz notes that this is the first time a release date has been mentioned for Pollard.

Hatzofe cited the Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam as saying that senior Palestinian Legislative Council member Rahim Abu al-Naja told reporters on Monday that the Palestinian factions agreed to a lull under the assumption that Israel would withdraw from additional areas. Hatzofe also reported that on Monday, the Palestinian daily Al-Quds blasted Arab states that maintain ties with Israel. Hatzofe reported that last Friday, the Voice of Palestine broadcasting on Radio Damascus praised the attack in the "settlement of Hadera."

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Israeli and Greek navies began three days of joint maneuvers near Crete on Monday in a sign of warming defense ties. The newspaper reported that Greece invited all seven of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue partners -- Israel, Algeria, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia -- to send delegations to the exercise. The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli naval officer as saying that Israel was the only country that accepted the offer.

The Jerusalem Post reported that "The Skies Are Weeping," a classical music piece inspired by Rachel Corrie, the pro-Palestinian American activist killed by an IDF bulldozer in March 2003, will premiere tonight in London.

Globes reported that on Sunday, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Richard Jones hosted Israel's senior businessmen on the occasion of "America Month" in the leading supermarket chain Super-Sol.

Citing news agencies, Yediot reported that 40 Iraqis, including many civilians, were killed in a U.S. bombardment near the Iraq-Syria border on Monday.

Leading media reported that a proposal to set January 27 as a world Holocaust Day is expected to be approved at the end of a special General Assembly session that began at the UN on Monday.

All media reported that on Monday, President Bush nominated Samuel Alito to the post of Supreme Court justice, after Harriet Miers' nomination fell through. The media note that Alito is a conservative judge opposed to abortion.

1. UNSC Vote on Syria:

Summary:

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "After the lofty words about unacceptable behavior ... the forces lined up in their usual pattern: West versus East, democracy versus dictatorship. The Security Council can reach an agreement only when it is sterilized, at least partially."

Block Quotes:

"A Return to Power Politics"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (November 1): "On Monday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice threatened Syria with 'serious consequences' if it refuses to cooperate with the international community's continuing investigation of the murder of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri.... However, it is unclear how much substance Rice's threat could have without the cooperation of Russia and China. They may not have stopped the international steamroller lumbering toward Syria, but they have managed to stall it.... Rice agreed to give up the main demands that were originally supposed to appear in the Security Council's resolution. The sanctions were not the only thing missing from the final version -- so was the demand that the Syrian government sever ties with the militant organizations that maintain offices in Syria.... After the lofty words about unacceptable behavior and the shock, real or feigned, of the assassination of a neighboring state's prime minister, the forces lined up in their usual pattern: West versus East, democracy versus dictatorship. The Security Council can reach an agreement only when it is sterilized, at least partially."

2. Iran:

Summary:

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "What [Ahmadinejad's] speech really shows is how millions of young Muslims are being systematically indoctrinated with the idea that they should sacrifice living standards, democracy, and common sense in pursuit of the fantasy of destroying Israel and defeating the West."

Block Quotes:

"'Osama Bin Ahmadinejad'"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (November 1): "Read Ahmadinejad's words and then try to find some differences between his ideology and that of Osama bin Laden. It is precisely the same worldview even though, of course, Ahmadinejad's inspiration is Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of Islamist Iran.... It should also be noted that outside of Saudi Arabia, most Gulf states are increasingly indifferent to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But what [Ahmadinejad's] speech really shows is how millions of young Muslims are being systematically indoctrinated with the idea that they should sacrifice living standards, democracy, and common sense in pursuit of the fantasy of destroying

Israel and defeating the West. Few will become suicide bombers; many more will participate actively in encouraging their own societies to commit suicide."

13. Mideast:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Sharon, as a former right-winger, the author of disengagement and as prime minister, has the primary responsibility to heal the divisions that his policies have induced."

Liberal columnist Dr. Gadi Taub wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "If the choice is between anarchy and Hamas, Hamas is not necessarily the worse among the two."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Missing Magnanimity"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (November 1): "By shepherding through disengagement, Sharon has fundamentally changed the political and diplomatic landscape. It is his job now, as leader of the nation, to build a more solid political foundation under this new reality, either within the Likud or outside of it.... This is not to say that what the country needs is a politics that is based entirely on the logic of disengagement. On the contrary, reconciliation with the right would be advisable precisely because it is not healthy for a large section of the electorate to feel disenfranchised.... Sharon can make, and no doubt has made, the argument to the right that his policy is the best way for Israel to both defend itself and define its permanent borders in a way that best fulfills our national interests. The responsibility does not fall entirely on Sharon; the right is ultimately culpable for the extent it is able to adapt to the new reality. But Sharon, as a former right-winger, the author of disengagement and as prime minister, has the primary responsibility to heal the divisions that his policies have induced."

II. "Better that Hamas Should Rule"

Liberal columnist Dr. Gadi Taub wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (November 1): "If Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz is right, and Abu Mazen is truly just a 'one-man show' and is incapable of controlling affairs on the ground, and if there really isn't a partner for negotiations in the Palestinian Authority, it could be that Israel needs to reconsider a few of its positions vis--vis Hamas.... It could be that if Hamas were to become the governing force in the Gaza Strip and would have to shoulder responsibility for both the achievements and the prices paid in all areas of life ... the Israeli responses would exact a price from someone who might be deterred by them.... Israel's best interest is to have a stable, central Palestinian government that is capable of forcing the extremists to bow to its authority. But if the choice is between anarchy and Hamas, Hamas is not necessarily the worse among the two. If Gaza is beset by complete anarchy, Israeli attacks might be able to strike at the terrorists physically, but they would prove to be completely ineffective in their effort to 'dry the swamp' of its ideology; on the contrary, these attacks would achieve the opposite: terrorism would become more pervasive, and people in despair would join it. The final calculation should be, in the event that the collapse of the PA forces us to make this choice -- between anarchy and Hamas -- that we would best be served, before we find ourselves in the corner, by exhausting all possible ways of helping our partner, even if it isn't a partner, to establish maximum control over the Palestinian territories. Both of the two options we will have to choose from in the event of the PA's collapse are bad."